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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 2nd MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 14 April 1986, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. CHOWDHURY (Bangladesh)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.40 p.m.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (E/ICEF/1986/1 and E/ICEF/1986/CRP.6)

1. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to the recommendations contained in the document on the proposed organization of the 1986 Executive Board session (E/ICEF/1986/CRP.6). As to the possibility of including a new sub-item on the question of a convention on the rights of the child as part of "Other business" (item 5) in the annotated provisional agenda (E/ICEF/1986/1), he said that the secretariat had prepared an informative note on the preparations for the draft Convention, which would be distributed as document E/ICEF/1986/CRP.7.

2. With regard to the inclusion in the general debate of the three policy review documents referred to in item 3 of the annotated provisional agenda, he noted that only two of them would be considered in relation to the item, namely, the document entitled "Expanded programme of immunization: impact and prospects" (E/ICEF/1986/L.4) and the document entitled "UNICEF expanded activities in Africa" (E/ICEF/1986/L.5).

3. Lastly, during the general debate the delegations would perhaps like to comment on the programme objectives and the resources needed to achieve them, as contained in the medium-term plan for the period 1985-1989 (E/ICEF/1986/3). Of course, the relevant recommendations would be considered by the Programme Committee, and the Committee on Administration and Finance would consider the financial plan and recommendations proposed in relation to it. He invited representatives to make any comments they deemed appropriate on the adoption of the agenda.

4. Mr. LINDORES (Canada) wished to know whether it would not be possible to accelerate the discussions of the Working Group so that its recommendations could be submitted to the Executive Board earlier than anticipated. He was aware that his request would be difficult to comply with in view of existing pressures, especially at the beginning of the session, but he wished to avoid putting off important questions to a later session for lack of time.

5. As to the agenda items, during the past year's session the view had been widely expressed that UNICEF activities in relation to the emergency situation in Africa were of such magnitude that they should be considered as an official agenda item. He recognized the prerogatives of the Executive Director concerning the approval of emergency activities; however, in view of the importance of the current programme, he felt that it would be useful to add the item specifically to the Programme Committee's agenda.

6. He also wished to see included in the Programme Committee's agenda an item on UNICEF activities concerning the promotion and recognition of the important role of women in development. During the previous year's session, his delegation had made a statement to that effect which had been supported by most members of the Executive Board. He had said on that occasion that UNICEF should be a leader in that field and that, if it wished to convince other agencies of their

(Mr. Lindores, Canada)

responsibility in that regard, UNICEF must play a particularly leading role. He felt that the report of the Executive Director (E/ICEF/1986/2) should have dealt with that question in more detail, in view of its importance. Requests had been made for, inter alia, more detailed information on the administrative strategy which would be needed, in order to carry out activities in that field, on the practical training of staff and on the monitoring of the results of the relevant activities in UNICEF. In view of the foregoing, he wished to request that an item related to that question should be included in the Programme Committee's agenda.

7. Mrs. FINKE-OSIANDER (Federal Republic of Germany) supported the proposal of the representative of Canada that consideration of the document entitled "UNICEF expanded activities in Africa" (E/ICEF/1986/L.5) should be included in the Programme Committee's agenda, since she felt that it could not be dealt with adequately in the limited time of the general debate.

8. Miss CORNAZ (Switzerland) said that her delegation supported the three proposals submitted by the Canadian delegation.

9. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objections, he would take it that the Board adopted the following proposals: that a meeting of the Working Group should be convened that week; that the consideration of the document entitled "UNICEF expanded activities in Africa" (E/ICEF/1986/L.5) should be included in the Programme Committee's agenda; and that a sub-item should be added to the agenda on UNICEF activities concerning the role of women in development. He had just learned that document E/ICEF/1986/L.5 would be accompanied by an appeal for $102 million for assistance activities.

10. It was so decided.

11. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objections, he would take it that the Board adopted the provisional agenda (E/ICEF/1986/1), together with the proposed organization of the 1986 Executive Board session (E/ICEF/1986/CRP.6).

12. It was so decided.

GENERAL DEBATE

13. Mr. VITTACHI (Deputy Executive Director for External Relations) said that in the past year UNICEF had further developed the distinctive feature which had characterized its 40-year evolution, namely, the ability to link hands with more and more people outside the secretariat, extending its outreach and intensifying public participation in its programmes. That was not only a good cost-efficient strategy but also good development theology, because UNICEF, more than almost any other intergovernmental agency, dealt with people, especially children.

14. While maintaining and developing its working relations with Governments, UNICEF had forged active links with private citizens and their institutions: non-governmental organizations, religious bodies, people's action groups, parliamentarians, professional associations, women's organizations, business corporations, journalists, popular artists and trade unions. Such links,

(Mr. Vittachi)

particularly those with trade unions, offered great potential resources for UNICEF's next 15 years. There were 15 years to go before the end of the century and, since UNICEF's wards were children aged 15 and under, what it did with the children now being born and raised would determine the state of the world's children in the new millennium.

15. The record of the history of UNICEF's past 40 years was now being completed. The documentary history of policy and programming for the information of staff and students had been rearranged chronologically in the archives. Some of that material was being written up thematically and geographically in pamphlet form, examples of which would soon be available to members of the Board, National Committees and others interested in UNICEF's work. Other pamphlets would be issued in the coming months, as well as a narrative history and a pictorial history of UNICEF at 40 written by staff members Maggie Black and Judith Spiegelman respectively. Early in 1987, a volume of data on children would be issued - a world almanac containing all possible information on children in the world - compiled by former UNICEF staff member Joan Bel Geddes. UNICEF was grateful to Dr. Hans Conzett and the Swiss Committee for UNICEF, members of the Standing Group of National Committees and Mr. Jack Charnow, Secretary of the Board for 35 years, for their participation in the history project.

16. The National Committees had responded in a co-ordinated and effective manner to the pressures placed on them by the pace of UNICEF's programme activities and the need to raise funds in the private sector, particularly to meet calls for further assistance for the African emergency. At a colloquium held at Warsaw in 1985, the National Committees had established stronger strategic links between child survival and development programmes and national action in industrial countries. At a global development education workshop, 24 committees had evolved and co-ordinated plans for improving development education. Sales of greeting cards and other products had also increased significantly in 1985. Finally, a Hong Kong Committee for UNICEF had been established, under the chairmanship of paediatrician Dr. Robert Fung.

17. It was becoming clear that the way of the future, like that of the past, would be to emphasize greater public participation. Increasing action to raise funds in the private sector was being stressed, since official Government contributions to general resources were not rising as fast as in earlier years. Moreover, because of the nature of UNICEF's priority programme actions, increasing involvement of the private sector was becoming a strategic imperative. UNICEF had co-operated closely with the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in their "Child Alive" programme, with Rotary International in its efforts to help eradicate poliomyelitis by the end of the decade, with the World Organization of the Scout Movement in the area of health and nutrition education, with parliamentarians in their advocacy of health, population and development needs, with the International Council of Nurses which had adopted the World Health Assembly's target of universal immunization, with the NGO Committee on UNICEF in its preparations for the Forum on Children, and with Defence for Children-International in its work on children in especially difficult circumstances and its comparative study on the draft convention on the rights of the child. During the year, closer co-operation had been established

with the Save the Children Alliance, as well as with various NGO groups. The high point of public participation had been the People's Forum held on 25 October 1985, with the participation of nearly a thousand non-governmental organizations, at which participants had pledged to achieve the goal of universal child immunization by 1990.

18. Links with the information media had also been strengthened, with many more conscientious and well-informed journalists taking up the struggle on behalf of children. The training programme for journalists and non-media communicators in the developing countries had already begun to win informed allies for child survival and development. UNICEF was grateful for Norway's generosity in providing the funds for that programme, which it hoped to expand and intensify in the coming months and years. Both The State of the World's Children 1986 and the report on Africa entitled Within human reach - a future for Africa's children had been disseminated by a greater number of newspapers and broadcasting stations, in a display of journalistic interest unprecedented in the history of United Nations documentation. That was because those reports were studiously prepared, professionally produced and vehicles of communication, rather than non-communication like most documents, since they dealt with human reality rather than intellectual abstractions. The State of the World's Children had been published in whole or in part in more than 40 languages.

19. UNICEF was pursuing its policy of co-operation with the printed and audio-visual media. The best and most widely disseminated television programmes had been the BBC's Global Report and the documentary Child Survival - the Silent Emergency which had aired in the United States. Moreover, the electronic information network set up in 1985 to facilitate exchanges of information between UNICEF offices and National Committees included an electronic mail service, a bulletin board and a full text data base. It was hoped to improve that network in the coming year in order to provide National Committees with the authentic substance and flavour of the information they needed from the field.

20. In 1985, UNICEF had participated actively in the open-ended working group on the drafting of a convention on the rights of the child. A UNICEF delegation had attended the 1985 session of the Commission of Human Rights in that connection and had made a statement in which UNICEF pledged to promote and implement the obligations inherent in the convention being drafted.

21. When the fiftieth anniversary history of UNICEF came to be written, it would no doubt say that UNICEF's main contribution to development in the 1980s had been social mobilization. UNICEF's experience confirmed the principle upheld by the theologians of development for 30 years, namely, that political will was the key to development. Largely as a response to advocacy of policies set by the Executive Board, many Government leaders, presidents and prime ministers had put the weight of their office behind those policies, placing the survival and development of children high on the list of national priorities in spite of devastating economic recession, violent political conflict and natural disasters. There had been a missing dimension, however: popular political will engendered by an understanding of the meaning and purpose of those policies. Too many administrators of

(Mr. Vittachi)

development programmes had been inclined to believe that the traditional approach of supplying technical expertise, technical equipment and the hardware of development from the centre to the periphery would achieve the objective. That theory was based on the assumption that people, the supposed beneficiaries of development efforts, were passive, inarticulate, mindless beings waiting for the boons offered by the centre to fall into their hands. That approach had worked only in societies where orders issued at the top ran, without opposition, right down to the smallest hamlet, and not in societies where people needed to be moved to participate willingly in their own development.

22. UNICEF therefore had adopted the demand approach whereby, through the intensive, credible communication of necessary information and education by the news media and, more especially, by the non-news media - people's organizations, religious and community groups - people were empowered by the realization that they could act themselves to improve their children's chances of survival and growth. The demand generated by that approach created the popular will to reach out to the health and educational facilities offered by the traditional supply system. When supply and demand met in that way, the result was development. The familiar argument that inadequate infrastructures were the reason for the failure to reach people then lost its force. UNICEF had found that parents empowered by information and knowledge embodied the permanent, sustainable infrastructure of development. That was the principal lesson that UNICEF had learnt from the child survival and development programmes, which had probably saved the lives of more than a million children in 1985.

23. Mrs. MARUPING (Lesotho) said that the current harsh economic situation had its greatest negative impact on the health situation of women and children: the death of some 14 million infants and children in the developing countries in 1985 was unacceptable. Thanks to the work of UNICEF, however, the lives of 1 million children had been saved in that year and an increasing number of countries were experiencing first-hand the effectiveness of the child survival and development strategy. That was why more and more countries were visibly pledging their support to such activities as universal child immunization by the year 1990.

24. Member States of the African region had always supported such activities and were currently seeking to refine programmes at the country level and to strengthen the activities of the expanded programme of immunization. One example had been the establishment in February 1986 of an oral rehydration therapy corner in the out-patient section of the National Referral Hospital of Lesotho. Within five weeks of operation, 400 children had been treated at the unit, and there had been no deaths. That was of great significance, because in 1984 there had been 115 deaths of children with diarrhoea. It was now possible to offer practical training to workers from all health institutions in the country.

25. UNICEF had started the right trend in focusing the child survival and development strategy on the mother. Its support for programmes aimed at addressing the needs of women and children in an integrated manner was a relatively new approach, which was beginning to produce excellent results.

(Mrs. Maruping, Lesotho)

26. With regard to the nutrition problem in Africa, she said that food aid offered only a temporary solution. Assistance should be in the form of development projects, not welfare programmes, and the projects must become self-sustaining in the long run in such areas as child immunization, diarrhoeal disease control, primary health care, and water and sanitation. The implementation of the water and sanitation programmes showed encouraging trends. That was one area which reflected a high degree of donor collaboration.

27. The subject of children in especially difficult situations was inseparable from the child survival and development revolution, and the approach to the problem should therefore be broad-based.

28. It was important to note that UNICEF field offices were being strengthened in Africa, where the greatest need was, and that administrative costs were being kept to a minimum.

29. Her delegation added its voice to those of the others which had called on the donor countries to continue to be generous to UNICEF. Since the problems of children and women had not yet significantly diminished, it would seem logical not to reduce resource levels.

30. Ms. DEVER (Belgium) said that the progress made by UNICEF with respect to child survival and development, and its work on behalf of children in general, constituted proof of its dynamism.

31. It was clear that large-scale operations such as the immunization campaigns mobilized the authorities of the recipient countries, and generated substantial additional contributions from Governments and from the private sector. They could also serve as a catalyst for longer-term activities in the area of primary health care. Long-term success would be achieved only through integrated and mutually balanced activities. As was stated in the medium-term plan, UNICEF should not only ensure the survival of children, but also improve their living conditions.

32. Activities under the expanded programme of immunization represented only one aspect of the effort to promote child survival. Child survival, for its part, accounted for one third of UNICEF's total expenditure. Her delegation would therefore prefer to see the presentation to the Executive Board give a better reflection of the respective importance of UNICEF activities in each sector within its competence, with a definition of the respective roles of UNICEF and WHO in sectors where their activities overlapped.

33. UNICEF had reduced from 7 to 5 per cent the estimate of increases in income. Nevertheless, a more cautious approach should be taken in respect of budget estimates, and there should be "stand-by" options for any sharp drop in income.

34. UNICEF's efforts to make a substantial reduction in permanent staff over the next biennium was commendable, provided that it was not accompanied by an increase in temporary staff and consultants. It was to be hoped that there would be complete openness regarding the composition and functions of staff.

(Ms. Dever, Belgium)

35. Judging from the provisional figures for 1985, the Greeting Card Operation seemed to have regained its momentum and profitability, on account of an increase in sales and a favourable trend in exchange rates. It was not acceptable, however, that certain National Committees should continue taking sales commissions in excess of 40 per cent of proceeds. The 25 per cent margin usually allowed seemed too high already.

36. With regard to "UNICEF House", efforts should have been made from the outset to present a relocation plan that would entail as little expenditure as possible, for an ostentatious and costly "UNICEF House" would damage the image of the Fund. As far as possible, the limited resources available to it must be used for the execution of programmes in the field.

37. UNICEF had moved into action in response to the emergency in Africa, and substantial contributions had been obtained. The Executive Board must have more detailed information on the use made of contributions already provided for emergency relief.

38. In his appeal of 1 April 1986, the Executive Director had pointed to the needs of certain countries not included in the list drawn up by the Office for Emergency Operations in Africa. However, in some of the new cases submitted, the difference between emergency programmes and longer-term development programmes was not as clear as one might have hoped.

39. The practical aspects and the questions of recruitment and staffing related to the reorganization of the field offices in Africa, which had begun in the past two years, should receive detailed consideration in the Committee on Administration and Finance.

40. With regard to children in especially difficult situations, a more realistic approach at the current stage would be for UNICEF, in close co-operation with Governments and non-governmental organizations, to continue activities whih it had undertaken to protect the interests of children and to disseminate information, activities which, according to the report, could be carried out with available resources.

41. Miss CORNAZ (Switzerland) said that UNICEF was doing a commendable job, with results that were often very encouraging. Nevertheless, it had an opportunity to fulfil even better its mandate of ensuring the well-being and smooth development of children. It was important to consider four aspects of UNICEF's policies with a view to determining its effectiveness.

42. In the first place, in going about its work UNICEF selected a limited number of priority activities - such as oral rehydration and immunization - which, in its opinion, had an effect on the health of children. With regard to the validity of that approach, two basic facts had to be pointed out: on the one hand, the focus of UNICEF's attention should be not on disease, but on human beings, especially mothers and children; on the other hand, health was the product of a host of

(Miss Cornaz, Switzerland)

factors which had to be borne in mind together and in isolation. On previous occasions, UNICEF itself had laid much emphasis on that integrated approach, and immunization should therefore be secondary to the promotion of better primary health care for all.

43. Controlling the major causes of the vulnerability of infants and children should be a priority concern. Of all those causes, lack of immunization was not as crucial as malnutrition - malnutrition first of the mother, then of the child. Switzerland therefore regretted that the Executive Director's report (E/ICEF/1986/2) failed to give due importance to the nutrition of mothers. It would be useful for UNICEF to review its order of priorities and to use an integrated or intersectoral approach, bearing in mind that such an approach must be adapted to the situation and requirements of each country.

44. The second aspect of UNICEF's operation - field staff - was very important, because such staff assumed much of the responsibility for country programming, which was the central element of the Fund's activities. Accordingly, it was to be hoped that UNICEF would continue fulfilling its function in the selection and training of field staff and in supporting their activities, in the interests of more effective programming.

45. Thirdly, his delegation had always attached great importance to the evaluation of a project at all stages of execution. The interesting thing was to find out what were the actual effects of an activity, for example, whether immunization campaigns had led to a reduction in morbidity and mortality rates of children or, in another sector, whether the drilling of wells had had the desired effect on health. The actual effects were not always on the positive side, and one had to know what they were in order to determine the value of UNICEF's activities. It would thus be possible to change, where necessary, the direction of specific activities. His Government believed that it would be useful for co-operating agencies to participate in the evaluation of certain projects that were being executed in conjunction with UNICEF. Such participation should be encouraged.

46. Lastly, he wished to take up the question of fund-raising and the determination of the necessary and available financial resources. The amount of funds provided to UNICEF depended largely on its public image. That image had been tarnished by certain activities which too closely resembled commercial publicity. Donors were more readily motivated by fund-raising campaigns based on real, assimilable information. Presenting aspirations as facts was not in the interest of UNICEF nor, in the last analysis, of children.

47. It was a mistake to think that UNICEF's achievements in the field would increase in proportion to the additional resources it received. Each programme must fulfil a set of conditions which were not automatically met by obtaining more funds. The quality of services was essential if UNICEF was to retain its credibility.

48. Mrs. LØJ (Denmark) said that the valuable UNICEF report on Africa's children, entitled Within human reach - a future for Africa's children, showed that the development of Africa depended on the attainment of a number of objectives. Among other things, it indicated the necessity of developing and implementing national policies and strategies that would reverse the growing dependence on food imports in sub-Saharan Africa and enable each country or subregion of neighbouring countries to become self-sufficient in staples. It also pointed to the necessity of meeting basic human needs - health care, water supply and basic education - to enable all citizens to enjoy a minimum standard of living, and of supporting the key role of women, who produced food for the family and ensured the well-being of children. Furthermore, the report indicated that the participation of the people was the key to success in efforts to combat environmental degradation in the arid and semi-arid zones of Africa. In short, the overall approach advocated in the report was the correct one, for development not only in Africa but in all developing countries.

49. UNICEF was generally a very efficient organization when it provided development assistance along those lines. Nevertheless, it could not be too strongly emphasized that in order to maintain its broad public backing and the support of Member States, UNICEF should continue to take a broad approach in meeting the needs of children. UNICEF should not develop into a children's health organization but should remember the old saying "prevention is better than cure". In the case of children, prevention should be based first and foremost on providing basic requirements such as clean water, adequate nutrition, shelter and a primary health care system.

50. The report of the Executive Director (E/ICEF/1986/2) placed too much emphasis on immunization activities and the distribution of oral rehydration salts. Although the use of such salts had saved 500,000 children from dying of diarrhoea, it must be remembered that the real cause of that disease in developing countries was the lack of clean water. Her delegation was looking forward to the policy discussion on children in especially difficult circumstances, since that was the core issue in UNICEF's mandate.

51. With regard to the activities described in the medium-term plan (E/ICEF/1986/3), namely, the acceleration of the immunization programme to reach the objective of universal child immunization by 1990, the acceleration of the use of oral rehydration therapy, the promotion of breast-feeding and sound weaning practices, the increased use of growth monitoring and the control of malaria in children and pregnant women, she considered that those important priorities should form part of a strong national primary health care infrastructure.

52. The medium-term plan should be carried out in close co-operation with other United Nations agencies, first and foremost WHO, and with the non-governmental organizations concerned. In that connection, attention should be drawn to the co-operation and collaboration of UNICEF with WHO and the Office for Emergency Operations in Africa (OEOA), and to the role that UNIPAC had played as supplier to UNICEF, WHO and other bilateral and multilateral donors. As the host country of UNIPAC, Denmark noted with satisfaction the favourable judgement expressed in the Cranfield Institute's report on UNIPAC's operations and efficiency.

(Mrs. Løj, Denmark)

53. The policy debate at the previous session had focused on women in development. The role of women was essential, not only to the development process in general, but to the survival and development of children in particular. Healthy children borne by healthy mothers would lead to the realization that fewer children were needed in a family, thus helping to solve one of the biggest challenges of the development process: the population problem. However, it was not enough to focus on women when dealing with family planning; there was an urgent need to educate men in that respect.

54. In conclusion, she praised UNICEF for the role it was playing in the area of nutrition and observed that UNICEF's valuable work on behalf of children was based on two solid pillars: the governmental system and the National Committees.

55. Mr. RESTREPO (Colombia) said that UNICEF had helped to clarify the sombre picture presented by the modern world, channeling the political will of peoples in such a way as to benefit great numbers of children. In the specific case of Colombia, two vaccination campaigns against five major diseases had made it possible to double the coverage in less than two years. Nevertheless, the country remained on the alert owing to the reappearance of some cases of poliomyelitis and intended to reach the 20 per cent of its children who had not been vaccinated because they lived in remote areas. The experience acquired and the increase in public awareness would be useful in that connection.

56. With regard to the UNICEF social mobilization guidelines, Colombia was implementing the child survival plan, with the participation of the Ministries of Health, Education and Communications and of young people, particularly those who were studying for their baccalaureate. That plan, combined with the immunization campaigns, was accelerating the demand for basic health services. It was therefore necessary to provide the health services in question. Multilateral co-operation was essential to that end, as had been stated at the meeting of the so-called Bellagio Group, held in Cartagena in 1985. A credit granted by the World Bank, with the participation of UNICEF and the Pan American Health Organization, had been used to broaden primary health care services in the most depressed areas of the country. In one of those areas, on the Pacific coast, he himself had had the opportunity to see the work being done by UNICEF and the Government of Colombia in the field of basic services through small production projects, drinking water supply systems and innovative maternal and child care systems.

57. UNICEF had drawn attention to the effect of the recession on the most vulnerable groups. If development was not to be a mirage, efforts must be made to change the international order and the internal order of each country simultaneously. With regard to the former, it was essential that a more solidary approach should be taken to relations among countries and that the external debt, the terms of trade and credit and development assistance should be dealt with more justly. That approach was vital to the survival of children, especially in Africa and Latin America. At the same time, the developing countries must recognize that it was possible to create internal conditions that were more conducive to the welfare of children; improved democracy should be the primary mechanism with regard

(Mr. Restrepo, Colombia)

to the redistributive aspects of development. Improvements in planning systems, the use of appropriate technology and a better organization of human resources were likewise essential.

58. Mr. KORHONEN (Finland) observed that, although the Executive Director's report (E/ICEF/1986/2) and other documents indicated that UNICEF continued to operate in difficult circumstances and that the situation of children in many regions had been worsening, UNICEF's performance in implementing the child survival and development strategy in over 100 developing countries was commendable, because it had helped to reduce infant and child mortality. He was glad that the Executive Director's report and the regional reports indicated the considerable differences between the degrees of implementation of the various components of UNICEF's basic services strategies.

59. The promotion of immunization and oral rehydration therapy campaigns had been allocated a greater share of UNICEF's resources and would be given priority in the next medium-term plan period. Although it was recognized that immunization campaigns and oral rehydration therapy were cost-effective in addressing the causes of infant and child deaths, more attention should be paid to other components of the basic services strategy, such as growth monitoring and breast-feeding. The education of women, water supply and sanitation should also be adequately reflected in the medium-term plan.

60. In some regions the campaigns had been successful, but in others it was difficult to assess what had been achieved. The Fund should evaluate all the relevant factors and, in that context, he recalled the WHO/UNICEF joint statement on immunization, which provided excellent guidelines for UNICEF action in the field. He noted with satisfaction that the report on the expanded programme of immunization (E/ICEF/1986/L.4) recognized the complementarity of infrastructure development, on the one hand, and immunization campaigns, on the other. It was encouraging that supporting actions and the provision of other basic services for children were being maintained and that in many countries there was a renewed interest in the development of primary health care, water supply and sanitation. In that context, his delegation was looking forward to the first five-year review of the implementation of the child survival and development strategy to be conducted in 1987.

61. With regard to UNICEF expanded activities in Africa, he noted that the United Nations system had been able to alleviate the worst consequences of the crisis; the international community had responded to the acute needs of Africa and, thanks to the assistance given and to the actions of African Governments, the worst phase was probably over. Long-term development programmes currently acquired greater importance.

62. As to the role of UNICEF, Finland endorsed the priority given to Africa in the medium-term plan. In the short term, UNICEF support for water supplies and household food production had yielded good results. Those programmes together with activities under the child survival and development strategy, water supply and

(Mr. Korhonen, Finland)

sanitation, as well as education, should be the core of UNICEF responses. For long-term development, Finland supported the proposal in document E/ICEF/1986/L.5 on the strengthening of the programming process, which it considered to be of vital importance. In practice, that implied that UNICEF should analyse more clearly than it had done its own role and its contributions to the development process in relation to the country's overall planning process. That would require not only increased financial support but also a considerable improvement in managerial, operational and co-ordinating abilities.

63. Mr. SCHUSTER CORTES (Chile) said that the celebration of the fortieth anniversary of UNICEF was for his country, and for the whole of Latin America, a very important occasion and a source of pride because of the feeling of involvement in UNICEF, which in the current crisis was a ray of hope and encouragement, with its concern for children and for future generations. The Fund was currently active in more than 113 countries all over the world; the far-reaching nature of its mission was illustrated by the special strength and enthusiasm of its work in the most needy countries.

64. The report of the Executive Director (E/ICEF/1986/2) announced that in 1985 more than 1 million children in Asia, Africa and Latin America who would otherwise have died of preventable diseases had been saved through the use of simple, inexpensive measures that were easy to apply and to repeat.

65. The concern of UNICEF for all the world's children transcended all ideological barriers, thus promoting the integration of peoples and countries and facilitating international understanding. In view of that significant fact, Chile urged all member countries once again to endorse the spirit of the child survival and development revolution launched some years previously by the Executive Director.

66. In that connection, it was extremely encouraging that, in its 40 years of existence, UNICEF had gone beyond the initial emphasis strictly on assistance and become an agency which, through appropriate policies, strategies and technologies, improved the living conditions of children in developing countries. Thus UNICEF had encouraged a number of projects in those countries that had subsequently been converted into social programmes and even policies to benefit children.

67. He thanked UNICEF for its valuable collaboration with Chile over more than 35 years, which had involved his country closely in the steady improvement in the health of the population and specially of children, in particular over the past decade. In the health sector, UNICEF had provided technical and financial assistance for maternal and child health programmes, vaccine production, milk supply programmes and programmes designed to improve the quality and coverage of health care in rural areas.

68. With regard to the care of children, UNICEF had worked with the Chilean Ministry of Justice to ascertain the real status of children in irregular situations, and the work had served as a basis for the formulation and implementation of a national policy for children and young people.

(Mr. Schuster Cortes, Chile)

69. The Fund had also collaborated in early stimulation and child development programmes, which were currently being implemented nation-wide through programmes incorporated in the health system and child care services. Those and other contributions by UNICEF had paved the way for the use of action which, once tried and tested, had become national programmes incorporated into public child care services throughout the territory.

70. The progress made in Chile in the health sector, as a result of which infant mortality was only approximately 19 per thousand live births and almost 97 per cent of births took place with professional care, had been achieved over 40 years of public health services in which the most salient feature had been the improvement of primary health care, particularly in the area of maternal and child health; those results had been obtained despite the acute economic crisis affecting the countries of Latin America as a consequence of the world recession.

71. He had referred to the example of Chile, firstly because it was the result of a consistent State policy of working with the private sector to expand primary health care services and of the financial and technical co-operation extended by agencies such as UNICEF and PAHO; and, secondly, because he believed that his country's experience could be repeated in other countries and offered considerable scope for horizontal co-operation with the other countries of the region.

72. Expansion of the scope of primary health care was essential in order to enable the population, and children in particular, to enjoy their right to health; such expansion was also essential in order to attain the WHO and UNICEF goals of health for all by the year 2000 and universal child immunization by 1990.

73. The problem was how to expand those services, and particularly regular maternal and child health programmes, within a low-cost sustainable strategy. In that connection, he wished to emphasize that the broad coverage of primary health care in Chile was due to the efforts of the State, which had, by encouraging the development of a joint health care system with the private sector, improved the basic level of health through an extensive network of rural hospitals, clinics and dispensaries spread throughout the national territory. Thus, even in the most remote locations, children could be looked after by a properly trained health assistant, backed up by a central organization.

74. One of the basic aspects of that strategy was integration of the work of professional health workers and para-medical personnel in maternal and child health programmes. The Chilean system of health services was an example of that approach, since its primary health care programmes, as well as the monitoring of pregnant women and healthy children, reached 90 per cent of Chilean mothers and children. Because of the wide range of such programmes, and their ability to reach the population most at risk and to provide integrated health care, there had been a drastic reduction in mortality, morbidity and malnutrition rates, at a cost not exceeding that for other countries of the region. The low cost was related not only to the efficiency of the programmes but also, in particular, to the benefits derived from a health care system which placed greater stress on prevention than on treatment.

(Mr. Schuster Cortes, Chile)

75. The high immunization rates in Chile were due to the strategy of integrating that activity into regular primary health care. By 1990 it would probably be possible to vaccinate all infants under one year of age and thus to attain the targets set by UNICEF and WHO.

76. Although the problem of survival still existed in Chile and in other countries of the region, the great challenge to be faced in the coming years was the task of improving the living conditions of children and achieving their optimum physical, psychological and social development.

77. The financial aid and technical assistance given by UNICEF to social programmes to benefit children in countries suffering the effects of the world economic crisis could act as a medium-term and long-term investment: once the crisis had been overcome, those countries would be able to increase their aid to UNICEF so that it could channel co-operation towards other more needy countries.

78. For the first time in its history, UNICEF was facing a financial crisis which had obliged it to rationalize its expenditures and to reduce its budget. However, too large a reduction might affect its work in the countries which most needed its help.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.